Wichita Eagle

EFFECTS OF CITY LIFE.

ITS DEGENERATING INFLUENCE OVER THE HUMAN RACE.

Rapid Increase in the Number of People Engaged in Sedentary Occupations—Sanitary Rules Ignored by the Masses—Better Houses Needed.

Writers have directed attention to the grave problem of city life and its condition as affecting the race. They point to the tremendous influx of country life which takes place yearly into London and other great centers of population, and they tell us that the city owes its chief vitality to this infusion of fresh, healthy blood into its masses. But in time these infusions will be affected by the prevalent causes of town degeneration; and so the great mill of life continues to grind us down, slowly, it is true, but to grind us out in time (say the physiologists) altogether.

Of course, the causes of the degeneracy which city life is said to effect are to be found in the generally unhealthy conditions under which existence is pursued. Pure food, pure air and pure water form the triped of life in so far as our surroundings are concerned; and it is precisely these conditions which are typically represented in our great centers. As to house accommodation, it is only of late years we have been awaking to the ideas that it is nothing short of disgraceful to permit cellar dwellings and dilapidated tenements to be inhabited at all; and that to screw out of the poor of the slums an extortionate rent for houses compared with which an ordinary piggy is cleanly and sanitary, is an extortionate, unjust and crying evil.

SEDENTARY OCCUPATIONS.

The fact is that the moment we have to deal with masses of human beings, aggregated together in cities and living under conditions which violate every rule of health, we come upon causes of physical degeneration which are too edvident to admit of theoretical modification, far less denial. An author has taken the trouble to total up for us the number of persons engaged in some half dozen sedentary occupations in London in 1881. We find his figures to give us: Indoor domestic servants, 254,703; general laborers, 78,115; milliners, etc., 71,887; clerks, 60,605; tailors, 41,761, and carpenters, 38,143. Thus, out of some 5,189,000 persons, about four-fifths lead an indoor life, and of these, two-fifths (or 173,009) follow purely sedentary trades.

What sedentary life means to the units which follow it closely most of us may know. It implies the want of the first essential for healthy life—pure air—and it includes yet another condition of vitality—free and open air exercise. Deterioration of frame in the one generation, we have also to note, is transmitted with tenfold force to the next. As health is cumulative in its effects, so also are disease and degeneracy; so that the mere pursuit of life and life's avocations in a big city must, in the cases of sedentary workers, be attended not only by an increasing lack of vitality, but by a transmission of the weakness to succeeding units. And there comes a point in this hanging on of feeble health, says the sanitarian, when the climax is reached in the shape of the absolute dying out of the enfeebled stock.

STARTLING MORTALITY.

The author from whom I have already quoted reminds us that if we treat London as a kind of country or area by itself we find that out of every 1,000 persons in London 371 are country born. An immigration of 37 per cent. thus represents what the London population owes to country blood. Again, Mr. Galton is emphatic enough in his calculations as to the percentage of the supply of units (to the next generation) which is represented in rural and city districts respectively. Thus, 1,000 families in rural districts will supply about 2,334 adults to the next generation, while 1,000 town families will only supply 1,793. The town supply is only 77 per cent. of the country installment, and to the second generation it is only 59 per cent. of the rural contribution. Attacked thus from the side of increase and continuance, we see that the failure of vitality in towns makes itself felt on the population question in a very marked fashion; and this accords with what Mr. Castlis tells us about the decadence of the pure bred Londoner.

Taking London, typically so called, and excluding districts which are more or less suburban in character, we are told that, comparing it with healthy districts, the difference of death rate is at the rate of 9.24 per 1,000 per annum. If now the population of typical London is set down at 2,707,208, we discover that 25,559 lives are thus annually lost in consequence of the conditions which prevail in this dense center of mankind. No less startling is the fact that of every 1,000 infants born (I quote from my author once again) 112 more die under 15 years of age in urban London than in healthy districts.

IS THERE ANY REMEDY?

I say to those who argue for healthy London that they represent the healthy units, I mean) the survivors of a very tremendous general mortality. They are the favored few who escape, by reason of their affluence, the dangers and degeneration which beset the many. It is the old story over again of the visitor to the slums of society, who said to his guide that the gutter children looked fairly well and sturdy. "Yes," replied the guide, "but these children play on the graves of their thousand companions who have succumbed," and what is true of the children of the slums seems in me to hold equally true of the population of every big city we know. Is there any remedy, then, I may be asked, for this degeneracy which accompanies city life?

We may certainly do much to better the existing state of things, and that according to plain health laws. We want the state to take up the question of proper dwellings for the masses, if private enterprise fails to accomplish the abolition of slums. We want philanthropists to purchase open spaces for us, and to give to the city lungs for the free respiration of its masses. So, also, we want wider facilities for reasonable recreation, and especially for the working classes. Greater facilities for cycling, football and other games will stave off physical degeneracy as perhaps nothing else will or can. Best of all, we must teach the masses the laws of health.—Andrew Wilson in London Illustrated News.

Thought It Was the Duke.

The Duc de Montpensier, who was one of the richest men in Europe, was noted for his closefistedness. It is said that a blind beggar in Paris, having a centime thrown into his hat by a passerby, exclaimed, "Merci, Monseigneur!" "Why do you say Monseigneur?" inquired an observer of the scene. "Oh, the gentleman who gave me that must have been the Duc de Montpensier," replied the beggar. —Exchange.

MARK TWAIN EXPLAINS A LECTURE.

A Washington Man Made a Date for the Humorist Without His Knowledge.

When Mark Twain was in Washington he told a number of interesting incidents and anecdotes. A gentleman well known in political and newspaper circles, on being introduced to this well known author, said to him that he had once had the pleasure of listening to a lecture of his which was delivered in this city twenty years ago.

"Did you?" asked Mark, in that inimitable drawl of his. "Well, now, I'll have to tell you something about that lecture. It was a little the hardest and roughest experience I ever underwent in my whole career as a lecturer. I came to Washington with no intention whatever of delivering a lecture. I simply came, don't you know, to meet my friends, see the city, and keep a little track of what was going on in congress, as do hundreds of other people in the course of the winter. This was twenty years ago, you remember.

"Now, I had not been in the city more than a day or two before a friend of mine came to my room at the hotel early one morning, wakened me out of a sound sleep, and nearly stunned me by asking if I was aware of the fact that I was to deliver a lecture at Lincoln hall that evening. I told him no and that he must be crazy to get out of bed at such an unseemly hour to ask such a foolish question. But he soon assured me that he was perfectly sane by showing me the morning papers, which all announced that Mark Twain was to lecture that evening and that his subject would be 'The Sandwich Islands.' To say that I was surprised would be drawing it mildly. I was mad, for I thought some one had put up a game on me.

"Well, on careful inquiry, I learned that an old theatrical friend of mine thought he would do me a favor. So he made all the necessary arrangements for me to lecture, with the exception of the slight circumstance that he neglected to inform me of any of his intentions. He rented Lincoln hall, billed the town and sent the newspapers advertisements and notices about the coming lecture. And the worst of it was that he had done all his work thoroughly. After learning this I was in a dilemma. I had never prepared any lecture on the Sandwich islands. What was I to do? I could not back out by telling the people that I was unprepared. No, that was out of the question, because the public wouldn't believe it. The billing of the town had been too well done for that. So there was only one thing left for me to do, and that was to lock myself in my room and write that lecture between the breakfast hour and 7:30 that evening. Well, I did it, and was on hand at the advertised hour, facing one of the biggest audiences I ever addressed.

"I did not use my manuscript, but in those early days I always had my lecture in writing, and kept it on a reading stand at one side of the place where I stood on the platform. I was very good at memorizing, and rarely had any trouble in speaking without notes; but the very fact that I had my manuscript near at hand where I could readily turn to it without having to undergo the mortification of pulling it from my pocket, gave me courage and kept me from making awkward pauses. But the writing of that Sandwich Island lecture in one day was the toughest job ever put on me."—Washington Post.

A Miniature Railway in Pekin.

About two years ago they presented a complete miniature railway to the emperor through Li Hung Chang, and the line, which is about three miles long, is laid down within the imperial city. The young emperor is very much interested in its workings, and spends a great deal of his spare time in riding to and fro in the beautifully appointed little carriages. He was greatly struck with the toy railway, and its influence upon the recent decrees has been very considerable. The old reactionary party amongst his advisers were adverse to the miniature line being laid down within the precincts of the sacred city, and it was very near returned to the donors. But the government was afraid lest it should give offense to the French, who are greatly feared and respected since they burned and sunk the Chinese fleet at Foochow, and inflicted such disastrous defeats upon the Chinese legions in the south.

In the end the present was accepted, but the high authorities would not allow any foreigners to have a hand in laying down or working the model railway. The result was when they started the little engine they could not stop it, and great consternation was occasioned to the occupants in the palace by their inability to control the strange contrivance of the foreigners, which dashed along the line till it was pulled up by coming in contact with a mound of earth. Since then, however, a Chinese driver has been procured, and the emperor is a frequent traveler upon the cars.—Shanghai Letter.

She Stared Calmly Ahead.

A young girl, tall, with wide blue eyes, still innocent of evil, got into a Madison avenue car at Eighty-fifth street Sunday morning. She carried in her lap a prayer book and in her hand a novel—one of those paper bound novels with the title standing out in bold relief. Her expression was so demure that the three men in the car would have sworn she cared more for the prayer book than the novel. At Eightieth street a severe looking man and his wife, both gray haired, took the car. The older woman looked across at the young girl, at her novel and prayer book, frowned a little and turned and whispered something to her husband. He was a little deaf, the car made a good deal of noise, so he put his hand to his ear and said, "What?" His wife repeated her remark a little louder, and still he could not hear. Finally she shouted in a thin treble so that all the car could hear: "I think it is a shame to see a young woman with a Bible and a novel. Her thoughts are all on the novel, and she would better have left the Bible at home." Everybody looked at the girl with the novel, but she stared calmly ahead and pretended to have heard nothing.

Sun Spots and Men's Trousers.

An eastern paper has made a remarkable discovery—a connection between sun spots and the tightness or looseness of the fashionable man's trousers. It says: It is a curious fact, and one noticed by but few eminent scientists, that at the time of maximum spottedness of the sun the trousers of men having a proper regard for the fashions are as tight as it is possible for trousers to be. Conversely, when, as is now the case, there are no spots to speak of on the sun, the trousers worn by fashion's slaves are wide and flowing in their outline.

In 1883, if the reader can remember styles so far back, the fashion for trousers was very tight, and so it was in 1870-71. At just these periods the sun spots were at their height of activity, great magnetic storms prevailed and the aurora borealis was flamboyant in the heavens. Similarly, 1877 was a period of great size in trousers, just as the seasons of 1888-89-90 were and are likely to be. As the sun spots grow more frequent and increase in size, the trousers will shrink, until in 1894-95 the spots will be at their maximum and the trousers at their minimum.

Effect of Realism on the Actor.

I know a much respected actor who was the acme of muscular development until he played a dramatic hero, who had to be hanged upon the scaffold every night. He told me his sensations were something horrible. To stand upon a trap with your arms bound behind you, a rope around your neck and a black cap over your face—even the thought of such realism is intimidating. But this man did it night after night, and he acknowledged to me that from the moment the black cap was pulled over his face he was in a semi-conscious state and could feel himself swaying about like a reed in the wind, waiting for the trap to give way and his body receive the thud of being hurled into space. Nightly that man dropped eight feet—suddenly and without warning—and, although he was strapped with solidly made harness all over his body, to support his weight, yet—supposing one little strap had given way? The audience might still have applauded, but the melodramatic hero would have been—beyond their plaudits.—Duncan B. Harrison.

An Expensive Town.

"How long were you in Paris?"

"I wasn't long in Paris. I was woefully short in Paris."—Chatter.

FASHIONS FOR CHILDREN

ONCE THEY NEVER WORE ANYTHING OF DARK COLOR.

Now the Elaborately Stitched and Hemmed and Hand Embroidered White Garments of the Past Are Almost Entirely Abandoned.

[Special Correspondence.]

NEW YORK, May 1.—It is not so very many years ago that children wore no dark colors at all. No color or tint was too delicate for them, and the mother who put a dark frock or cloak upon her child was considered far more hard hearted than Pharaoh and more economical than loving, but she was bound down to backache and sideache from the extra labor entailed on keeping her little girls always sweet and clean in the delicate dresses. It was not uncommon to see a little child dressed for ordinary occasions in a white cashmere which had been laboriously embroidered by hand, and if it was hard on the mother it was no less hard on the child, for no freedom could be allowed a child for natural, healthy play.

IRIS DRESS AND HUBBARD CLOAK.

But now all that is changed, and there is no color that mothers wear that is not fit for the little girls, and fashionable, too.

The benefit of this system is that there is not so much work to keep the children clean, and the children are happier and healthier, because they can play without restraint, and it is far more economical in several ways.

Of course there will always be occasions for a white dress made as daintily as mother love can devise and mother's tireless patience can accomplish. Such an one is the pretty little Iris dress made of soft white mull, embroidered deeply around the bottom and worn over a pink wash silk slip, with a tiny plaiting around the bottom, just showing under the edge of the mull. A sash of the same silk crosses the waist and is tied in an enormous bow at the back. The sleeves are puffed over silk and with deep cuffs and bretelles of embroidery. Blue corn color, old gold or Eiffel red can all be used for the slip if preferred.

And the dear little coaxing sister! She is going out with grandma in a little Hubbard cloak of brown and fawn striped cheviot and a big poke bonnet all of seal brown straw and plumes. The little coat has for its only trimming a row of tucks surmounted by a herring bone in saddler's silk. Not at all gay or elaborate, but oh, how quaint and sweet the little maiden looks in it!

"A quiver full" of dear little children is to be desired, but it has its drawbacks, particularly when Bobby is always needing shoes and Minnie and Nellie stockings, hats, etc. The best way to dress them is to give Bobby a pretty little kilt suit of serge or cheviot or heavy blue flannel, made with a blouse, and socks and stout boots. A toreador hat is just now the style for him, with a triple cocarde at the left side.

Get Minnie a Tartan plaid and make it on the bias, and trim it with a row of open castle or Hercules braid, with a sash of the same, and dress her doll with the scraps left over. Give studious Nellie a quiet little gown of dark blue flannel, neatly made with the front of surah, which was all the best part of big sister Mabel's last year's dress, and you will find your little ones well dressed and very economically dressed, too.

Ginghams are as strong as iron and fadeless as the sky; therefore ginghams are good for boys and girls to wear for spring and summer, where laundry work does not count. Where it does, light woolens are better and quite as cool, though not quite so summery looking. But nothing suits a boy so well as a sailor suit, with gilt braid, an embroidered anchor and "real sailor buttons" with a foul anchor on them. I am sorry to relate that while mothers would like to keep the pretty and picturesque Fauntleroy suits on their boys, these latter turn up their noses and mutter "chestnuts" scornfully.

A QUIVER FULL OF THEM.

Little girls, of course, wouldn't do such a thing, but they are all in favor of the shorter skirts, as they, too, are a little tired of the Empire and Sara Crewe style. The waists to the summer ginghams, chambreys and lawns, as well as muslins, are all made very tastefully and with much ornamentation, while the skirts are very plain. Sashes are fastened with heavy and enormous buckles in shell, steel or oxidized silver.

Hats are in all sorts, kinds and colors of straw, and trimmed as you please. Shirred hats of gingham for quite little ones are as pretty as a picture over the sweet little faces. The strings are of the same material. OLIVE HARPER.

From November to May the exportation of cut flowers from the little town of Cannes, on the south coast of France, reaches the sum of $718,865.

The number of birds seen in the vicinity of Philadelphia since the first day of January last by the Delaware Valley Ornithological club had recently reached 118 species.

Never touch a vine that has three fingered leaves; that is, leaves divided into three parts. Vines that show five fingered leaves may be handled with safety. Poison ivy has three fingers.

A summer cottage built by a New York millionaire of hemlock logs hewn on three sides with the bark left on the fourth side. A veranda is constructed on three sides of the building of hemlock logs in the rough.

The bolo flower, discovered by Dr. Schadenberg growing upon a volcanic mountain in one of the Philippine islands, is perhaps the largest flower in existence, being about three feet in diameter and twenty-two pounds in weight.

A modification of Edison's phonograph is said to have been devised by a painter in Milan. It costs under $20 and the wax cylinders are reproduced in zinc by the galvano plastic process at a cost of five cents each, selling price.

An engineer on the Iron Mountain road has perfected an automatic bell ringer on his locomotive, and now, when running in corporation limits, or whenever the bell must be rung, he just jerks a spring and the bell is kept going by steam power till he turns off the steam.

An extraordinary feat in telephoning was recently accomplished between St. Petersburg and Bologna, a distance of 2,485 miles. Conversation was kept up, notwithstanding a rather high induction. The Russian engineers propose to converse by telephone over a distance of 4,665 miles.

A professor in the University of Klausenburg claims to have compounded a solution which completely neutralizes the poison introduced into the system by the bite of a mad dog. This solution consists of chlorine water, salt brine, sulphurous acid, permanganate of potassium and eucalyptus oil.

A curious fact is noticed in connection with the formation of barnacles on ships' bottoms. In the majority of cases there is a much heavier growth of grass and barnacles on one side than on the other, and in numerous instances one side will be almost free from marine growths while the other is as foul as possible.

During one of the snow storms of the past winter in the Rocky mountains nineteen engines were required for one train, which was made up as follows: First a snow plow, with nine engines behind it, then a train of nine cars with another five engines, and behind this five engines with a gang of men to dig the train out should it get stuck.

A mustache trainer has appeared. It is an elastic, curved strip of thin metal, at either end of which is secured an adjustable plate, faced on the inner side with soft cloth, in order that the machine may comfortably clasp the ends of the mustache. The latter is carefully arranged at night or during periods of seclusion and the trainer fixed upon it.

There is a firm in Cincinnati which each years beats 21,000 gold dollars into gold leaf, and as each dollar can be beat into a sheet that will carpet two rooms 16½ feet square, some idea may be formed of its tenuity. It requires 1,400 sheets of gold leaf to equal in thickness a sheet of writing paper, and takes 280,000 of them, piled one upon the other, to equal an inch in thickness!

The largest sailing ship in the world is in the possession of France. She is a vessel with five masts, on four of which squaresail is carried. The length is 344 feet, with a beam of forty-nine feet. The cargo which the France could carry is 6,000 tons. The ship is built of steel, her masts and yards being of the same material. She is at present trading between France and the Pacific.

Buy Good Kitchen Towels.

By keeping two sets of kitchen towels in use in rotation the housekeeper can see at a glance whether they are kept in order. It does not cost over $1.50 a year to keep the kitchen of a small family supplied with hemmed towels and dishcloths. The petty amount saved by using cast-off flannels and other old pieces for this purpose is more than counterbalanced by time making up these pieces, which hardly give a week's serviceable wear. The very best material for a dishcloth is linen stair crash. Four good dishcloths of linen stair crash will cost just six cents each, and will last a year if they are not used to scour knives and to wash the bottoms of iron pots.—New York Tribune.